

Statement from Minister of Northern Development and Mines on Aboriginal Consultation and Mineral Exploration

Rick Bartolucci, Minister of Northern Development and Mines, released the following statement today on consulting with Aboriginal communities on mineral exploration and development:

“Our government is responsible for managing Crown lands and the natural resources of this province. In so doing, we must balance the need to promote economic development and our thriving mineral exploration and development sector with our commitment to meeting our constitutional obligations to Aboriginal peoples.

Since 2006, when Ontario introduced its first ever Mineral Development Strategy, our government has worked diligently to promote collaboration between industry and Aboriginal communities in order to build positive business relationships that meet the needs of Aboriginal communities and industry.

We have seen numerous examples where Aboriginal communities and industry have forged productive partnerships. In fact, since 1999, more than 100 mineral development benefit agreements have been signed between Aboriginal communities and industry. Ontario supports these and other partnerships and commends industry players who engage and consult with Aboriginal communities in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding.

Just last month, our government introduced the second phase of its modernized Mining Act regulations. The new rules set out in the regulations are about providing industry and Aboriginal communities with regulations and policies that offer clear, progressive guidance about Aboriginal consultation as it relates to mineral exploration activities.

Many industry players are excellent corporate citizens who follow industry best practices and make engagement and consultation a cornerstone of their business processes. Our regulations and supporting policies will help provide guidance to help companies in Ontario act responsibly, and with respect for Ontario’s Aboriginal communities.

Industry, Aboriginal communities and government all have important roles to play in an effective consultation process. It is our hope that the mineral exploration industry will encourage its membership to act in compliance with the new regulations, while engaging with Aboriginal communities in a co-operative and respectful way that builds positive relationships. This way we will continue to see both Aboriginal communities and our mineral exploration and development industry benefit and thrive for decades to come.”